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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - DAVID FIRESTEIN
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage June 2-4 on U.S. law enforcement's announcement Sunday of its having foiled an alleged terrorist plot to bomb the JFK Airport; and on the year-end legislative elections and the 2008 presidential election. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" and its sister paper, the English-language "Taipei Times," both ran an exclusive news story June 4 that quoted an ex-chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell as telling "Esquire" magazine that

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hawkish U.S. officials had encouraged President Chen Shui-bian's administration to move toward a declaration of independence.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed President Chen's video conference with the National Press Club last week. The article said Washington has decided to put aside the Taiwan card for the time being, because it does not want to mislead Taiwan and thus unexpectedly accelerate the deterioration of U.S.-China ties. A "Liberty Times" commentary commented on the Pentagon's recent report on Chinese military power and urged Taiwan to continue pushing for the nation's normalization process now, before China has the capability to attack Taiwan. An editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the American Chamber of Commerce's (AmCham) annual white paper on Taiwan and urged the DPP administration to listen to AmCham's warning. End summary.

13. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

A) "Taiwan Talking about Human Rights -- a Headache for the United States"

Emerson Chang, director of the Department of International Studies at Nan Hua University, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (6/4):

"... First, the United States' upholding democracy and human rights is primarily for its national interests rather than on moral grounds. ... It may sound right for Taiwan when Chen Shui-bian emphasized human rights [during his video conference with the journalists in Washington]. But for the United States, such a move likely violates the U.S. national interests and was thus difficult to win the United States' recognition. ... Second, the United States defines Taiwan's development of the ground-to-ground missiles as of an offensive nature. [Such a position] was reflected in AIT Director Stephen Young's remarks made in early May, and it is closely related to Taiwan's call for maintaining flexibility with regard to its options for [the island's] future. ...

"... [E]ven though chances are slim for China-U.S. relations to improve in the short term because of the shortage of positive conclusions from the China-U.S. Strategic Economic Dialogue and from [the Pentagon's] report on Chinese military power, Washington still

decided to put aside the Taiwan card for the time being so as not to mislead Taiwan and unexpectedly accelerate the deterioration of China-U.S. ties. This is the main reason behind the current impasse in Taiwan-U.S. relations, despite the fact that Taiwan is now in a favorable position in the triangular relationship (meaning that both China and the United States are now engaged in strong competition with each other in economic, military and strategic aspects.)"

B) "A Nation's Normalization Must Not Be Deterred by the Use of Force"

Cao Changqing, China-born freelance journalist based in U.S., noted in the "Weekly Commentary" of the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 500,000] (6/3):

"The 'Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2007' report released by the Pentagon a week ago indicated that China is rapidly expanding its military power, and its capability of threatening its neighboring countries is on the rise. On the other hand, however, China is facing various factors of instability inside the country. Taiwan and other Asian countries ought to keep alert but need not feel panic about it. The report also clearly indicated that, as of now, the People's Liberation Army does not have the capability to attack Taiwan, particularly in the case of U.S. intervention.

"China's growing military buildup alone is likely to cripple the United States' influence in Asia, and it will directly threaten the United States' democratic ideals and its strategic interests in the entire Asia-Pacific area if China uses force against Taiwan. Thus the U.S. military has a fundamental internal consensus over [the U.S.] intervention in the conflicts across the Taiwan Strait. ...

"While the internal and external situations both fail to help, China is naturally incapable of using force against Taiwan; all it can do is to threaten and coerce [the island]. But this does not mean that Taiwan can lower its guard and therefore does not need to purchase any weapons. In reality, Taiwan needs to possess powerful defense capabilities, no matter under what kind of situation, so that it has

the power to resist in case of attacks, and it can demonstrate the island's determination and strength to defend itself in an attempt to discourage Beijing. In the meantime, Taiwan should also proactively strive to push for the normalization of the nation, making it a reality before China has sufficient military power to attack Taiwan. This is a difficult but completely plausible process, and the key lies in the Green camp's confidence and determination."

C) "[Like a] Dog Barking at the Train Each Year, What Else Can [Americans] Do?"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (6/4):

"... The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) said in its annual white paper that Taiwan will be in big trouble as early as next year if it fails to ease its restrictions on cross-Strait exchanges and trade. Such [a position] is nearly consistent with the warning given by AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young in May, in which he said that the slower Taiwan opens the three links, 'the bigger the risks are [for the island] to be isolated from the trend of regional integration.' All these have indicated that the United States has held deep apprehension over the trend of Taiwan being gradually marginalized. Despite the business interests of U.S. firms, for the United States, a Taiwan that is isolated from the international political system can remain functioning. But it will bode ill if Taiwan is gradually isolated also by the international economic system. ...

"This paper has reminded more than once regarding the timetable for economic integration in East Asia in 2008 and 2012. But unfortunately, the ruling party not only does not care about it but has also sought to isolate itself from this megatrend. Whoever attaches great importance to this topic will be labeled as pro-unification. ... The fact that foreign chambers of commerce are willing to write a white paper each year indicated that they value [Taiwan] and still want to stay here. It will be too late [for Taiwan] to argue what should be done or what should not be done if

someday these foreigners do not feel like publishing an annual paper!"

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